

**NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROGRAM APPROVAL REVIEW**

**CLEARWAY HIGH SCHOOL
FINAL SUMMARY REPORT**

Marianne Wiley, Clearway

Visit Conducted on May 8, 2002
Report Date, September 18, 2002

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I. Team Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Professional Role</u>
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Visiting Team Members:

Nancy Kaputa	Reading Specialist
Linda Rice	Special Education Case Manager

Building Level Team Members:

Marianne Wiley	Clearway Program Director
Mary Jordan	Executive Director
Jobee Sinclair	Associate School Psychologist

II. INTRODUCTION

The Clearway High School, established in 1977, is an alternative high school located in Nashua, New Hampshire. The school presently serves approximately 35 high school students (age 15 – 20) from a wide range of southern New Hampshire school districts. Throughout the course of the year, approximately 100 students will attend the school until they either gain their GED or complete required credits toward a high school diploma. While approximately two thirds of the student population is not educationally disabled the school is able to provide educational supports to students with learning disabilities, emotional handicaps, other health impairments, and speech and language disabilities. Students who are referred to the Clearway High School are often at-risk of dropping out of school. Clearway provides a safe and structured alternative environment that allows students an opportunity to complete a traditional high school course of studies and gain a regular diploma from their local school district.

III. PURPOSE OF VISIT

The New Hampshire Department of Education conducted a Special Education Program Approval Visit to Clearway High School on May 8, 2002 for the purpose of reviewing the present status of programs and services made available to children and youth with educational disabilities

Activities related to this Program Approval Visit included the review of all application materials submitted by the Clearway administration, verification of personnel credentials for education staff, program descriptions, and analysis of data collected during the visit. Data included the review of student case studies, interviews with staff, administrators, students and parents and classroom observations. Throughout the entire review process, the visiting team worked in collaboration with the staff of Clearway High School. Their professionalism, active involvement in the process and cooperation were greatly appreciated and well recognized.

IV. PROGRAM APPROVAL REVIEW PROCESS

The New Hampshire Department of Education provided Clearway High School with a visiting team of professional educators to work collaboratively with staff in conducting the data collection and special education program approval activities. The one-day visit was designed as a focused review on the following areas of programming:

- Access to the General Curriculum
- Transition
- Assessment

The NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Process allowed the visiting and building level team members to conduct case studies of a representative sampling of the special education student population, ages 15-20, throughout the school. Evidence of the work conducted and results related to student outcomes was gathered throughout the process, guided by the materials and templates provided by the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education. Examples of evidence included student individual education plans (IEPs), progress reports, samples of student work, grades, extracurricular involvement, permanent records, curriculum, etc. Input was gathered from key constituents, including interviews with professional staff, parents, administrators, and students. In addition, classroom observations were conducted for each of the case studies being reviewed. The collective data were summarized by the visiting and building level teams. The summaries, included in the report that follows, outline identified areas of strength and areas of improvement needed for Clearway High School.

V. STATUS OF PREVIOUS PROGRAM APPROVAL REPORT AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Based on review of the NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Report, dated June 1998, the following patterns were identified as needing improvement:

Ed.1102.11(n) – Transportation during the school day for work or career awareness opportunities has been resolved. Costs are covered by the sending school district.

Ed. 1109.08 – The issues of awarding high school credits toward the attainment of a regular high school diploma has been resolved. Clearway does not award credits, but rather has worked with consultants to revise their curriculum to reflect a clear alignment with the NH Frameworks. This work allows students to continue accessing the general curriculum while at Clearway and to gain required high school credits toward the completion of a regular high school diploma that is granted by their sending district. Work on the curriculum revision is well underway and expected to be completed by August 2002.

Ed.1119.10 – Length of school day has been addressed by reducing the time allotted for students lunch periods and eliminating breaks during the day. This has allowed the administration to add a 5th class period to the school day. In addition, Tech Start, a comprehensive computer technology program, has been added to the school's curriculum.

Ed.1133.04 – Since the previous program approval visit, Clearway High School's policies and procedures manual has been revised to comply with NH state rules and federal requirements of IDEA '97.

Ed.1133.08; CFR 300.037 – All Clearway staff either hold NH certifications or are enrolled in an alternative certification process. Consultation from NH educators certified in areas not represented by present Clearway staff certifications has been established. Staff report that initial consultations have been beneficial and will continue to provide instructional support in the relevant content areas. This includes consultation in providing physical education credits to students who need that course for completion of a high school diploma.

Ed1133.13 – The playground fence has been repaired.

In addition, the added position of special education coordinator has been critical in organizing student records and overseeing the special education process for students with educational disabilities.

VI. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

COMMENDATIONS

- Clearway High School provides an effective alternative educational program to at-risk high school students. The environment provides a learning environment that is calm and focused on learning.
- Students are fully engaged in instruction and abundant evidence of student work is clearly displayed.
- The atmosphere in the school is comfortable. Behavior management is very effective and results in a safe and secure environment where learning can occur.
- The school staff are professional, knowledgeable, enthusiastic and dedicated to the work they are doing with Clearway students.
- The Board of Directors and Executive Director provide support and resources necessary to the program.
- The administrator is dedicated to the program and is supportive of staff and students.
- The school provides excellent technology resources. The computer lab has up-to-date computers and software for student and staff use.
- The grant funded Tech Start computer skills training program allows students opportunity to build a computer, develop a knowledge of computer technology and gain valuable experience in preparation for the world beyond high school. The program provides follow-up services to students for a full year after completion of the program.
- The school is a true alternative opportunity for students who were considering dropping out of high school before completing a high school diploma or GED. The staff work hard to individualize programs for students to meet specific needs.
- Counseling for students requiring such supports is available and effective. Counseling groups provides students an additional support.
- The theater program is described by students and staff as highly successful and provides good extracurricular opportunities for students.
- The School-to-work component is a critical transition element and provides students with real life experiences.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Continue to work with sending school districts to communicate the mission and programming opportunities for at-risk youth.
- Continue to strengthen the mentoring/consulting relationship between Clearway staff and certified staff from neighboring school districts. Ongoing consultation in best instructional practices is encouraged.
- Continue to develop and finalize the curriculum project.
- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities to staff in instructional practices, implementation of the new curriculum, best practices in alternative programming, etc.
- Offer opportunities for staff to visit and observe other alternative and traditional high schools to gain additional insights into effective practices.
- Continue efforts to provide resources, support and competitive benefits for staff so that the present stability in staffing can be maintained.
- Begin a system of gathering data related to student outcomes so that real evidence can be used to inform future planning and improvements.

ACCESS TO THE GENERAL CURRICULUM

ED 1109.05 CFR 300.342 Implementation of IEPs

ED 1115.07 CFR 300.306 Provision of Non-Academic Services

ED 1119.03 CFR 300.26 CFR 300.347 Full Access to the District's Curriculum

ED 1119.08 CFR 300.304 Equal Education Opportunity

Students at Clearway High School are provided access to the general curriculum. The staff work hard to ensure course work that meets the NH requirements for completion of a high school program. Students and parents report that successful progress and academic achievement is a hallmark for students who were previously unsuccessful in school. The classroom observations, along with a review of student work and the school's curriculum indicate that the school has continued to strengthen and improve the course of studies available.

TRANSITION

ED 1102.53 CFR 300.29 Transition Planning

ED 1107.02 CFR 300.347 (b) (1) Process: Provision of FAPE

ED 1109.01 CFR 300.132 Transition Services

Clearway staff work hard to provide a smooth transition to the program from the receiving school district. However, the degree of preparation often depends on the district the student is arriving from, as well as the time of year. Students report that they would have felt less anxious about the move to the alternative school if they had had more information during the transition period. They, however, also report a smooth transition once the move to the school occurred. The staff work hard to ensure each student's comfort as they arrive at Clearway and to help them prepare for transition to the world beyond high school. Students transitioning out of Clearway are assisted with plans to continue their education by helping students gain non-drivers identification, visit a vocational college, use the Tech Start summer program and work on career planning. There is a great deal of individualized support for students throughout the transition period.

ASSESSMENT

ED 1133.05 (l) CFR 300.347 (a) (5) RSA 193-C

Students at Clearway participate in the NHEIAP assessments during their 10th grade year. Clearway staff provide the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) at the beginning and end of each year, as well as math assessments, unit assessments, behavior monitoring, Pre-GED practice tests and progress reports. Districts provide vocational assessments and Clearway staff access results in planning for student IEPs.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS: POLICY AND PROCEDURE

ED 1106.01 Special Education Process

ED 1103.01 Child Find, Responsibilities of the LEA

Clearway High School has a complete and up-to-date policy and procedure manual that complies with the NH State Rules and federal regulations under IDEA '97. They also provide a student handbook to all students.

VII. BUILDING LEVEL SUMMARY REPORTS

USING COMPLIANCE DATA FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

BUILDING LEVEL COMPLIANCE DATA SUMMARY

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL AND IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

School: Clearway High School

Recorder/Summarizer: Jobee Sinclair

Date: May 8, 2002

Based on data collected from the Data Collection Forms, Interview Forms, Classroom Observations, etc. the following summary is intended to provide a “snapshot” of the quality of services and programs in the school/private facility in the areas of: **Access to the General Curriculum, Transition and Assessment.**

Access to the General Curriculum		Summary of Evidence
<u>Ed. 1109.05, Implementation of IEP</u> <u>CFR 300.342</u> <u>Ed. 1115.07, Provision of Non-Academic Services</u> <u>CFR 300.306</u> <u>Ed. 1119.03, Full Access to District's Curricula</u> <u>CFR 300.26</u> <u>Ed. 1119.08, Equal Education Opportunity</u> <u>CFR 300.347(a)</u> <u>CFR 300.304</u>		Clearway High School
Indicator Level and Description		
0	Student does not have access to the general curriculum.	
1	Student has access to the general curriculum	
2	Student participates in the general curriculum in the regular classroom	
3a	Student participates and progresses in the general curriculum with non-disabled peers for majority of the day with necessary support(s)	
3b	For Private Schools: Student has opportunities to interact with non-disabled peers on a regular basis	
3c	Student has the opportunity to participate in general extracurricular activities with necessary support(s) and is encouraged to do so.	
3d	For High School Students: Student has the opportunity to earn regular credits leading to a regular diploma	
4	Student engages in the general curriculum with necessary support(s) and participates in extracurricular activities in the Least Restrictive Environment	Student interviews, schedules, IEP (including modifications), parent interviews, staff interviews, and review of current and new curriculum work all indicate student engagement in the general curriculum. Extracurricular activities include: after school job, school theater group, Tech Start, driver's education.

Transition		Summary of Evidence
<u>Ed. 1102.53, Transition Planning</u> <u>CFR 300.29</u> <u>Ed. 1107.02, Process; Provision of FAPE</u> <u>CFR 300.347 (b) (1)</u> <u>Ed. 1109.01, Transition Services</u> <u>CFR 300.132</u> This includes movement from (a) ESS to preschool, b) pre-school to elementary school, (c) age 14 or younger, or (d) age 16 or older		Clearway High School
Indicator Level and Description		
0	No evidence of transition planning	
1	Transition occurs, with little or no written documentation	
2	Written documentation exists for transition services	
3a	Team includes parents and personnel from other agencies in transition planning	
3b	Student is informed before age 17 of his/her rights under IDEA	
3c	Plan addresses instruction, community, employment and daily life skills in a complete and comprehensive manner	
4a	District has implemented a process to evaluate the success of the student's transition	
4b	Team, including student as appropriate, regularly assesses success of transition plan	IEP's are comprehensive; students have access to Tech Start (transition planning, case management, job skills), Adult Education to College Program, assisted with obtaining non-driver's identification.

Assessment		Summary of Evidence
<u>Ed. 1133.05 (l), Program Requirements</u> <u>CFR 300.138</u> <u>CFR 300.347 (a) 5,</u> <u>RSA 193-C</u> This is not limited to NH statewide testing [NHEIAP]. It should also include districtwide and school assessments administered to non-disabled peers.		Clearway High School
	Indicator Level and Description	
	0 No evidence of student participation in district or state assessments	
	1a Student participates in district-wide and school assessments	
	1b Student participates in state assessment	
	2 Alternate assessment provided as needed for both district and state assessments	
	3a Assessment data is used to develop IEP	
	3b Multiple measures used for assessments (e.g. report cards, student work, teacher observations and portfolios)	Progress reports (3 X yr.), Test of Adult Basic Education [TABE] (2 X yr.), teacher observations shared at staff meetings (2 x wk.) & IEP planning worksheets with teacher feedback are used to develop the IEPs. Student work samples, math skills assessments and unit assessments are all used to assess student progress.
	4 School uses assessment data to improve student learning (state, district-wide or school assessments)	

Clearway High School	
Strengths	Suggestions for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearway provides small classes; personalization with students; a supportive administration and Board of Directors, as well as a cohesive staff who use a good model of communication. 2. There is a strong sense of community at the school. Students report a clear sense of acceptance despite a highly diverse population. There is a non-judgmental climate fostered at the school. 3. Students express enthusiasm for the program. They report new success, with issues such as attendance that had previously posed significant problems at their traditional high school placement. 4. The staff at Clearway is excellent. There is good support for professional development. 5. Staff are encouraged to advocate for students. 6. Technology is a strong component. The computer lab and Tech Start program provide critical access to technology, including the opportunity to build the computers being utilized in the program. 7. The behavior management process used at Clearway is excellent and results in a safe learning environment for all. 8. Curriculum development through consultant support in Science, Social Studies, English and Math that aligns Clearway's curriculum with the NH Frameworks is commended. 9. Mentors (consultants) certified in content areas work well with staff to develop knowledge of best practice in instructional strategies. 10. Classroom resources and materials are available and adequate. 11. Student work, including artwork, is displayed throughout the school. 12. The Program Director is very fair with both staff and students and is a very supportive of staff. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin tracking data for current Clearway students to more comprehensively measure progress and use for future program planning and IEP development. 2. Continue to explore options for providing "extras", possibly outside of the school day. 3. Consider various ways to inform public school districts of the services available at Clearway for students "at risk" of dropping out of school. Perhaps meet with special education staff at district high schools, as well as use the Tech Start program as an informational tool. 4. Continually review staff benefits and needs to assure future staff retention and stability.

VIII. ADDENDUM: JAMES O SUMMARIES

ADDENDUM

JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

Clearway High School

Student File Review

Case Study Document

Reimbursement Claim Form

Case Study Addendum Form

Date: May 8, 2002

Reviewer: Maryclare Heffernan

<p style="text-align: center;">ADDENDUM JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM</p>

Clearway High School

Number of files reviewed: There are no court placed students at Clearway High School who fall under the James O. Consent Decree.